

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-07 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01  
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15  
USIA-06 OMB-01 /076 W  
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R 181344Z FEB 77  
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1402  
INFO AMEMBASSY COLOMBO  
AMEMBASSY DACCA  
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD  
AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
AMCONGEN MOMBAY  
AMCONGEN CALCUTTA  
AMCONGEN HONG KONG  
AMCONGEN MADRAS  
USLO PEKING  
CINCPAC HONOLULU

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 2525

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINT, IN  
SUBJECT: INDIAN ELECTIONS II: COMMENTS ON THE CONGRESS LISTS

REF: NEW DELHI 2521

1. SEVENTY-EIGHT PERCENT OF SITTING CONGRESS MPS WERE  
RENOMINATED IN THE 1971 ELECTIONS, A CLOSE APPROXIMATION TO  
THE SEVENTY-ONE PERCENT RENOMINATED THIS YEAR, BUT SHARPLY  
HIGHER THAN THE PREDICTIONS OF SEVERAL WEEKS AGO. THE  
YOUTH CONGRESS HAS RECEIVED AN INSULTING HANDFUL OF THE  
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TICKETS WHICH IT HAD EARLIER SO CONFIDENTLY EXPECTED.  
THE LONG-TERM EFFECT OF THIS SETBACK ON YOUTH CONGRESS  
FORTUNES IS UNCERTAIN, BUT IN THE SHORT-TERM, THE YOUTH  
CONGRESS HAS SUFFERED A HUMILIATING SETBACK. WE DO NOT  
KNOW WHAT FINALLY DECIDED SANJAY TO RUN PERHAPS IT WAS THE  
BELIEF THAT IF HE DID NOT CONTEST NOW, HIS FUTURE IN PUBLIC  
LIFE WOULD BE FINISHED; HIS (AND THEREFORE THE PM'S) PRESTIGE

WAS TOO MUCH ON THE LINE FOR SANJAY TO BACK OUT NOW.

2. THE IDEOLOGICAL CONFIGURATION OF THE CONGRESS LISTS IN THE VARIOUS STATES APPEARS TO BE RELATIVELY BALANCED BETWEEN RIGHT, MODERATE AND LEFT. SUCH PROMINENT LEFTISTS IN THE CABINET AS CHANDRAJIT YADAV, K. D. MALAVIYA AND K. N. SINGH RECEIVED TICKETS FOR THEIR HOME DISTRICTS IN U.P. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE CONGRESS HIGH COMMAND ALSO RENOMINATED A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF MODERATE MPS WHO ARE OPENLY HOSTILE TO THE CPI. MRS. GANDHI DID NOT WANT FURTHER DEFECTIONS BY PROMINENT CONGRESSMEN FROM EITHER "LEFT" OR "RIGHT" BECAUSE THEY WERE EXCLUDED FROM THE LISTS. AT THE SAME TIME, THE RENOMINATION OF SUCH A LARGE PERCENTAGE OF SITTING MPS, MANY OF WHOM WE BELIEVE THE PM WOULD HAVE BEEN HAPPY TO DUMP, WAS ITSELF AN ASSURANCE THAT THE BROAD SPECTRUM OF VIEWS WITHIN THE PARTY WOULD BE RETAINED, AND AN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT BY THE PM THAT SHE MAY HAVE TO RETURN TO THE COMPROMISES OF THE "OLD POLITICS" AFTER THE ELECTIONS, PARTICULARLY IF HER MARGIN OF VICTORY IS SUBSTANTIALLY REDUCED FROM THAT IN 1971.

3. DESPITE EARLIER CONFIDENT PREDICTIONS BY THE CPI LEADERSHIP THAT THE CONGRESS WOULD BE FORCED TO WORK OUT ELECTORAL ADJUSTMENTS AND UNDERSTANDINGS WITH THE COMMUNISTS IN MANY STATES (THEY SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED BIHAR, PUNJAB AND U.P.), SUCH ADJUSTMENTS FINALLY APPEARED ONLY IN THREE STATES WHERE CONGRESS IS WEAKEST AND WHERE ELECTORAL ALLIANCES ARE A NECESSITY TO ENSURE THAT CONGRESS PICKS UP AT LEAST A FEW SEATS. EVEN AFTER THE BLOW DEALT BY RAM'S  
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RESIGNATIONS, THE CONGRESS REJECTED ADJUSTMENTS WITH THE CPI IN THE TWO STATES WHERE THE JANATA/CFD COHZINATION IS LIKELY TO POSE THE STRONGEST THREAT, BIHAR AND U.P. THE PRIME REASON FOR THIS WAS PROBABLY THE STRONG RESISTANCE TO SUCH ARRANGEMENTS BY THE LOCAL CONGRESS LEADERSHIP IN THE TWO STATES.

4. ALL IN ALL, CONGRESS HAS PROBABLY PUT TOGETHER AS STRONG A TICKET AS IS POSSIBLE UNDER THE PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES. IT IS A CONSERVATIVE, TRADITIONAL, CASTE AND COMMUNITY ORIENTED COLLECTION OF NAMES. IT INCLUDES MANY POLITICIANS WHOSE LOYALTY IN A CLOSE POST-ELECTION PARLIAMENTARY CONFIGURATION WILL BE HEAVILY INFLUENCED BY THE REWARDS THEY AND THEIR COHORTS GET FROM THE PM. THIS IS ONE KEY ELEMENT IN OUR TENTATIVE ASSESSMENT THAT THE "OLD POLITICS" MAY BE MORE IMPORTNAT AFTER THE LECTION THAN IT HAS FOR THE LAST SIX YEARS, AND THAT THE THREAT OF SHIFTING LOYALTIES IN THE EVENT OF A CLOSE ELECTION COULD WEAKEN THE EX'S POWER AND CONCEIVABLY EVEN THREATEN HER LEADERSHIP POSITION.

THE CONGRES LISTS IN SEVERAL STATES ARE VULNERABLE IN TERMS OF LOCAL FACTIONAL RESENTMENTS, PARTICULARLY KARNATAKA, WEST BENGAL, AND GWAJARAT. LOYALTY TO THE PM, WHICH EARLIER WOULD PROBABLY HAVE BEEN ONE OF THE KEY CONSIDERATIONS IN DECIDING UPON CANDIDATES, WAS IMPORTANT BUT PROBABLY LESS SO AFTER RAM'S DEFECTION THAN SIMPLY TRYING TO SELECT "WINNERS." THE HEAVY EMPHASIS ON SLECTIONS OF FORMER MPS AND THE ATTENTION TO CASTE AND COMMUNAL CONSIDERATIONS APPEARS TO HAVE MINIMIZED THE NUMBER OF "DEFECTIONS" FROM CONGRESS WHICH A MORE FREE-WHEELING CHOICE OF CANDIDATES MIGHT HAVE PRODUCED, AND WE HAVE THUS FAR SEEN RELATIVELY FEW REPORTS OF IMPORTANT CONGRESSMEN LEAVING THE PARTY IN HIGH DUDGEON AFTER THE LISTS WERE CLOSED.

5. THOSE FOREIGN VISITORS, AMERICAN AND OTHERS, DURING THE LATE PRESIDENT'S FUNERAL CEREMONIES WHO ASKED MRS. GANDHI ABOUT POLITICAL PROSPECTS ALMOST UNIFORMLY  
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FOUND HER SERIOUSLY CONCERNED, WORRIED, AND CONVINCED THAT IT WOULD BE A VERY TOUGH FIGHT. AT THE SAME TIME, THEY FOUND NO EVIDENCE THE PM WAS THINKING IN TERMS OF OTHER SOLUTIONS TO HER PROBLEMS THAN A FIGHT TO AN ELECTORAL CONCLUSION. THE ONLY PEOPLE WE HAVE HEARD OF IN THE LAST WEEK WHO PROFESS TO BELIEVE THAT CONGRESS WILL SWEEP TO AN EASY VICTORY ARE SANJAY GANDHI, HIS WIFE, AND HIS MOTHER-IN-LAW.  
SCHNEIDER

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## Message Attributes

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